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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.

THE DRUG WAR:
APPLYING THE LESSONS OF VIETNAM

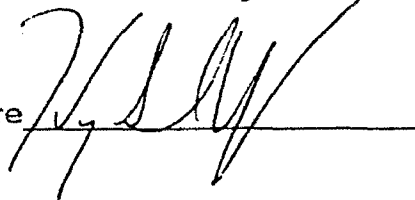
by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.


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19 July 1993
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AD-A 265317

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No 0704-0188

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified		1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS	
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY		2. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.	
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE			
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)	
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT	6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable) C	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION	
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)	
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION	8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) NAVAL WAR COLLEGE NEWPORT, R.I. 02841		10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS PROGRAM ELEMENT NO. PROJECT NO. TASK NO. WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.	
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) THE DRUG WAR: APPLYING THE LESSONS OF VIETNAM (U)			
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) SHEAR, WAYNE G. Jr., LCDR, CEC USN			
13a. TYPE OF REPORT FINAL	13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____	14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 930222	15. PAGE COUNT 33
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.			
17. COSATI CODES FIELD GROUP SUB-GROUP		18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) DRUG WAR, VIETNAM. COCAINE	
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) By applying the lessons of Vietnam a new concept of operations is suggested which eliminates active interdiction by the U.S. military in the drug war. The current use of force is not furthering the strategic objective of reducing drug use in the United States, indeed, after four years of active military involvement, the cocaine market is saturated. The root causes of the war are not amenable to a military solution and the use of force is making the situation worse. This paper does not focus on the drug control policies of the United States nor does it attempt to analyze the organization or tactical employment of forces, rather it criticizes the operational concept which links the two. The problems encountered by the U.S. military in stemming the drug supply are found to be similar to those faced in Vietnam. A strategic estimate of the drug producing region shows that military action spreads the production of cocaine, strengthens and diversifies the drug industry, and exacerbates political, economic and social problems in Latin America. Limiting the U.S. military to detecting and monitoring the drug supply will stabilize the price for cocaine and reduce the incentive to produce and ship the drug. Ultimately lower prices will drive down the drug supply and give U.S. diplomatic, economic and social programs an opportunity to work.			
20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS		21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified	
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL CHAIRMAN, OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT		22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code)	22c. OFFICE SYMBOL C

58
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Abstract of
THE DRUG WAR: APPLYING THE LESSONS OF VIETNAM

By applying the lessons of Vietnam a new concept of operations is suggested which eliminates active interdiction by the U.S. military in the drug war. The current use of force is not furthering the strategic objective of reducing drug use in the United States, indeed, after four years of active military involvement, the cocaine market is saturated. The root causes of the war are not amenable to a military solution and the use of force is making the situation worse. This paper does not focus on the drug control policies of the United States nor does it attempt to analyze the organization or tactical employment of forces, rather it criticizes the operational concept which links the two. The problems encountered by the U.S. military in stemming the drug supply are found to be similar to those faced in Vietnam. A strategic estimate of the drug producing region shows that military action spreads the production of cocaine, strengthens and diversifies the drug industry, and exacerbates political, economic and social problems in Latin America. Limiting the U.S. military to detecting and monitoring the drug supply will stabilize the price for cocaine and reduce the incentive to produce and ship the drug. Ultimately lower prices will bring down the drug supply and give U.S. diplomatic, economic and social programs an opportunity to work.

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THE DRUG WAR - APPLYING THE LESSONS OF VIETNAM

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The United States is losing the War on Drugs. Despite a concerted effort on the part of the United States military to stem the flow of cocaine, the drug has saturated the American market. Cocaine is more available, less expensive, and higher in quality than ever before. In fact, the present use of force serves to strengthen, not weaken, the cocaine trade, and military coercion is having a negative political, economic and social impact in Latin America. One lesson of the Vietnam War was that force, improperly applied, can be worse than no force at all. This is true today in the drug war. The best contribution the military can make to the strategic objective - which is reducing drug use in the United States - is to stop interdicting drugs.

This paper will address the operational role of the United States military in the campaign to interdict the flow of cocaine from Latin America. Vietnam will be used as a frame of reference, because, just as in the drug war, political, economic and social factors played so large a role in determining the military concept of operations. Vietnam also demonstrated, tragically, the consequences when planners fail to reassess a losing military strategy.

A realistic discussion of the drug war must include strategic factors in order to place the employment of the military in

perspective. First the national strategy, and the present use of the military within this strategy will be examined. Then parallels with Vietnam will be developed to suggest that force is not an appropriate weapon to reduce the drug supply, and that the use of force is having adverse consequences within the drug producing region. Finally, recommendations will be provided for a revised concept of operations - specifically - how the U.S. military should best be utilized to fight the drug war.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

The Cocaine Industry

Cocaine users in the United States are fueling the economies of several Latin American countries. In 1991 between 1,051 and 1,287 tons of cocaine was produced in Latin America, up from 969 to 1,199 tons in 1990.¹ The primary producing countries are Colombia, Bolivia and Peru with a smaller amount being produced in Ecuador.² To say coca production was simply an "industry" in these Andean countries would be understating the problem. Eliminating production in Peru and Bolivia would put over half a million people out of work.³ Fully fifteen percent of the work force in Peru is dependent on cocaine, and the coca leaf creates nearly one half of Bolivia's foreign exchange.⁴

The cocaine cartels have financial resources that rival entire nations. The drug bosses offered to pay off the national debt of Colombia, \$14 billion, if their government would refuse to sign an extradition treaty with the United States. When the Justice Minister refused, he was shot in the head three times.⁵ The Cartels are responsible for murdering over 4,000 people, including more than 50 judges in Colombia, yet they have put together a formidable political base by providing jobs, building affordable housing and public facilities, and donating millions of dollars to the poor each year.⁶

Aggressive drug interdiction efforts by the U.S. have forced the Cartels to diversify routes and improve their methods of shipment. Unfortunately this has spread the war to other Latin American nations and created political and jurisdictional problems for the United States. Smugglers now ship to intermediate countries to "disguise" the point of origin.⁷ Guatemala is now a primary air transshipment point from South America. Belize and El Salvador are being used more frequently. Cocaine is airdropped into Hispaniola, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands for transfer to surface vessels. Mexico is a key transshipment point since cocaine can be flown in and then driven into the United States.⁸ Cocaine is increasingly being smuggled in commercial cargo containers, the numbers of which (over 8 million arrive each year) make it impossible to inspect them all.⁹ Drug profits finance sophisticated equipment. Pilots are delivering cocaine without lights using night vision goggles.¹⁰ One boat seized off Puerto Rico with a ton of cocaine in 1991 was constructed of fiberglass in a stealth configuration specifically to avoid detection by radar.¹¹

President Bush identified the shipment of "illicit narcotics" into the United States as a threat to the national security.¹² The National Drug Control Strategy was developed in response to the problem, and it provides guidance to each of the 33 federal agencies involved in the drug war.¹³

The National Drug Control Strategy

The stated objective of the national strategy is to reduce drug use in the United States and the measure of effectiveness is the level of drug use in the country.¹⁴ Yet the budget emphasizes drug interdiction. Of the \$12.7 billion dollars budgeted for the 1993 program, 68% is targeted toward supply reduction. The Department of Defense (DOD) portion of the 1993 drug control budget is \$1.22 billion, all of which is targeted toward supply reduction.¹⁵ The aim is to reduce the supply of drugs, raise the traffickers cost of doing business, and reduce profitability. This strategic emphasis on supply reduction presupposes a classic supply and demand problem. By reducing drug availability (supply) prices will go up and use (demand) will go down. Unfortunately this economic model does not fit, drugs are addictive - the majority of users will not be forced out of the market simply because drugs are more expensive.

Supply reduction involves; 1) the source ; 2) trafficking networks; 3) and law enforcement within the United States. The Bush Administration's **Andean Drug Initiative** targets the source. This five year, \$2.2 billion program began in 1990 and involves the major cocaine producing countries of Colombia, Bolivia and Peru. The goal of the massive aid is to "...work with Andean governments to disrupt and destroy the growing, processing, and transportation of coca and coca products within the primary source and processing countries, in order to reduce the supply of cocaine entering our country."¹⁶ The program

provides military as well as economic assistance, and includes crop eradication and substitution programs, weapons, financial and advisory assistance to military forces, direct aid to preserve local institutions (to counter corruption), and also aid to host nation law enforcement agencies.¹⁷

The Role of the U.S. Military

The 1989 Defense Authorization Act designated DOD as the "single lead agency" for detecting and monitoring illegal drugs flowing into the U.S.¹⁸ Substantial progress has been made in integrating and expanding surveillance, particularly outside the U.S., but the military has assumed a more proactive role.¹⁹ U.S. forces are now key participants in "source" programs such as the Andean Initiative and are actively attempting to disrupt the supply networks from Latin America. The National Guard is even participating in counter-narcotics missions inside the U.S.²⁰

There is no single theater or functional Commander in Chief in charge of military forces in the drug war; instead the military is organized to support other agencies of the U.S. government in the three "supply reduction" tasks noted above. The United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) has taken the lead in the Andean source countries. U.S. military personnel provide training, mission planning, communications and logistics support to Latin American military forces and law enforcement agencies. They directly support crop eradication programs, operations against processing and transportation facilities and seizures of

property.²¹ These actions go beyond detection and monitoring. General Joulwan recently informed Congress that supporting the Drug War is Southern Command's top priority.²²

The United States Atlantic Command (LANTCOM) has formed Task Groups 4.1 and 4.1.2 to operate in the Caribbean and the west coast of Central America to monitor, detect and seize drugs. U.S. Coast Guard personnel are on board Navy ships so that arrests can be made. The United States Forces Command (FORSCOM) coordinates DOD support to law enforcement agencies within the United States. Going beyond strictly detection and monitoring, the National Guard is assisting in such tasks as eradicating marijuana fields and manning border patrols in the Southwest United States. The North American Aerospace Command (NORAD) remains a detection and monitoring service but, with Canadian cooperation, is now required to positively identify every aircraft approaching North America.²³

The U.S. military is not "in charge" of the War on Drugs and despite the formation of the Drug Enforcement Agency in 1973 there is no single Federal Agency in charge. The State Department is the lead agency in dealings with foreign governments, the Customs Service and Coast Guard are the lead agencies for air and sea interdiction, and the Justice Department has the lead in law enforcement within the United States. The Department of Defense is tasked to be the lead agency for detection and monitoring only.

Current Status of the War on Drugs

The strategic objective of reducing drug use within the United States is not being met. Casual use of cocaine is down slightly but "hard core" use of the drug is up and hard core users consume more than 60% of the drug supply.²⁴ The number of cocaine users is rising overall.²⁵ The Inter-American Commission on Drug Policy attributes the drop in casual use of cocaine to changing attitudes, not reduced availability. The quality and availability of cocaine are at record levels.²⁶ This is key - gains in the drug war are a result of attitudes - not the market! Statistics are clear - cocaine is abundant - attempts to reduce the supply have failed. If drug use was a matter of supply and demand, casual drug use, as well as hard core use, would be up.

Senator John F. Kerry of Massachusetts, during a 1992 Senate hearing concerning the Andean Drug Initiative stated;

I am concerned , however, that a lot of this may be a little bit like holding a bucket under a waterfall. Back in 1987 the DEA set a goal of reducing cocaine supplies by 50% in 3 years. That goal has been abandoned. In 1990, the President announced a new goal-reducing imports of cocaine and other hard drugs by 15% in 2 years. That goal, too, has been abandoned.²⁷

Price on the street is a measure of availability, so is the purity. In 1991 the price of cocaine was between \$11,000 and \$40,000 per kilogram with prices dropping in some areas. Prices

are little different than 10 years ago.²⁸ The purity of cocaine has "increased dramatically" since 1987.²⁹

In 1991 Customs, the Coast Guard and the Border Patrol seized 115 tons of cocaine.³⁰ Unfortunately this represented only 10% of the estimated cocaine production in that year.³¹ Despite crop eradication efforts in the Andean source countries coca leaf production rose from 291,100 tons in 1987 to an estimated 332,540 in 1992.³²

Military Effectiveness

The increased use of the military has not been effective in slowing the drug supply. One Air Force officer made the Vietnam comparison, "We couldn't interdict the Ho Chi Minh trail...right now, coming up from the south, we have a Ho Chi Minh trail four thousand miles wide."³³

In 1990 DOD devoted 48,025 flight hours and 3,830 steaming days to drug interdiction. The flight hours represented (in part) over one half the AWACS flying hours available in that year. The military detected 6,729 "potential drug trafficking aircraft" but this ultimately resulted in only 49 interdictions by civilian agencies and another 24 aborted flights by drug runners.³⁴ This represents a very large commitment in resources and a very small return.

The General Accounting Office said in September of 1991, "...DOD's detection and monitoring efforts have not had a significant impact on the national goal of reducing drug

supplies. The estimated cocaine flow into the United States did not decrease in 1989 and 1990." The report goes on to say;

Many smugglers will continue to transport cocaine into the United States with impunity, unless (1) better search technology is developed and (2) the profit margin in cocaine trafficking is reduced. Interdiction alone cannot raise cocaine traffickers' costs and risks enough to make a difference, regardless of how well DOD carries out its detection and monitoring mission.³⁵

In summary, cocaine consumption is up, and despite the concerted efforts of the U.S. military, the supply has risen dramatically. In fact, there is such an abundance of supply, cocaine sold in Europe originates in the United States!³⁶ Since 1989, when the U.S. military was first tasked to get involved - the harvest of coca, the production of cocaine, the delivery of product to the United States, and the use of cocaine within the United States - have all gone up! Clearly, the present use of military force is not weakening the drug industry.

CHAPTER III

THE DRUG WAR AND VIETNAM

Is it valid, or fair, to compare the current state of the war on drugs to the experience of the United States and the U.S. military in Vietnam? No troops are being killed - the President has specifically banned U.S. military forces from participating in direct combat. The country is united concerning the objective - reducing drug use. It can be argued that military involvement in the drug war is good training and preparation for war. Naval operations at sea in concert with the Coast Guard and Air Force is valuable Joint Operations training. It is proper that NORAD protect U.S. airspace by identifying all contacts and that FORSCOM help to protect U.S. borders. Special forces gain valuable experience planning clandestine operations. Finally, SOUTHCOM is performing an important role by operating with Latin American countries, training personnel and building infrastructure that could be of use during a contingency.

The central question, however, remains; is the present use of force helping attain the strategic objective? If it is not, then the \$1.22 billion being spent this year by DOD could be put to better use. Certainly, as the U.S. enters 1993, there is no shortage of regional conflicts, or training opportunities. U.S. military commitments are growing around the world. In the worst case, if the present use of force is counterproductive, then there is no rational justification for staying the course.

"The lessons of Vietnam" has become a cliché, but Vietnam illuminates the problems that are faced today in attempting to use force in a war that cannot be won by force. In the Vietnam war political, economic and social factors conspired against the effective use of military. The use of force alone could not achieve the strategic objective, and the inappropriate use of force ultimately damaged U.S. interests.

The Center of Gravity

The enemy's center of gravity is the "...hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends. That is the point against which all our energies should be directed."¹ The North Vietnamese center of gravity was their political ties to the Soviet Union and China. It was not politically, or militarily, feasible to use force against this center of gravity. Instead U.S strength was frittered away in a war of attrition with the North Vietnamese. As long as the North Vietnamese maintained their allies it was impossible for the U.S. to win by force of arms. Only when North Vietnam sensed that the United States was dividing their coalition by political means (President Nixon went to Peking and Moscow in 1972) was peace finally made.²

In the drug war the enemy's center of gravity is the demand for drugs. Satisfying the demand creates the economic incentive to supply drugs. If cocaine was not profitable the supply would dry up. After four years the U.S. military has not been successful in either pushing the price up or making cocaine

unprofitable. Military force simply cannot influence the cultural problems that make supplying cocaine profitable. This is why the present use of force is inappropriate. It is not directed, in any way, at the enemy's center of gravity.

Restrictive Rules of Engagement

The U.S. military was hamstrung by the rules of engagement in Vietnam. Shipping that was destined for the North Vietnamese war effort couldn't be attacked. North Vietnam was off limits to U.S. ground troops for fear of spreading the war. The Ho Chi Minh Trail through Laos was a safe logistics pipeline to South Vietnam. Similarly, there are restrictive rules of engagement for U.S. military forces in the drug war. The military cannot be involved in direct combat, the sovereignty of drug producing nations is inviolate, foreign airspace cannot be entered without permission - even in pursuit of a known drug carrier. The rules of engagement should not be changed, but the very existence of these restrictions should be another indication that force cannot be used effectively in the drug war.

Little Incentive for Allies to Support the War

As early as 1964 North Vietnam had apportioned almost four million acres of land to peasants in communist controlled areas of South Vietnam without a hint of collectivization, (this changed quickly after the war) they also organized labor

unions.³ Throughout the war the communists worked very hard to gain the support of the South Vietnamese population. By contrast, the South Vietnamese government became more corrupt and removed from the people. It proved impossible for the South Vietnamese government, and the United States, to gain strong support for the war. Indiscriminate use of force exacerbated this problem. Communism became an attractive alternative to many South Vietnamese.

The situation is the same in Latin America today. The economic well being of Peru, Bolivia and Columbia is tied to coca, and eradication programs drive a wedge between the people and their governments. The drug traffickers have presented themselves as an attractive alternative to existing civil authorities who are perceived to be supporting the United States against the best interests of the people. U.S. support in law enforcement, raids, and crop eradication programs amplify the discontent.⁴ This serves to empower the drug traffickers and make government law enforcement programs less successful.

The Enemy's Ability to Sustain War

North Vietnam enjoyed the materiel and financial support of both the Soviet Union and China. Their ability to fight the United States was essentially limitless as long as her ports and borders remained open and sufficient manpower was available. Sustaining the guerrilla war required only 15 tons per day of supplies.⁵ Without building a wall around South Vietnam, or

attacking the source of sustainment, the United States could not reduce this miniscule logistics tail enough to impact the war.

So it is with the drug traffickers, who are geographically diverse, well financed, and easily able to reconstitute after a loss. One DOD official said recently before Congress, "But I predict that it will be kind of like the Pillsbury Dough Boy. Once we push them out of an area, they will pop up elsewhere."⁶ Even if one cartel is damaged by military action, another will quickly take its place. As long as the huge economic incentive to get into the business remains, force will not discourage the traffickers.

Inappropriate Measures of Success

The term "body count" has become synonymous with tragedy and futility. But what is measuring success by "tons seized" if not a body count type statistic? The Department of Defense coordinator for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support stated specifically in 1991 that he resisted using these statistics as a way of monitoring performance, however, these numbers are the only way to put a positive spin on the military's contribution.⁷ The National Drug Control Strategy clearly states that "...the levels of drug use remain our paramount indicators." Yet "tons seized", "production facilities destroyed", "aircraft seized", "acres eradicated" are used extensively by DOD to report progress. There is simply no other way to measure success in military interdiction efforts, and this in itself should be a

sign - the tactical employment of the military is not related to the ultimate objective - which is reducing drug use in the United States.

The Need For Reassessment

One of the tragedies of the Vietnam War was that it became apparent to members of the Johnson administration, as early as December, 1965, that the United States was not going to win a war of attrition against North Vietnam.⁸ Yet it was easier, from a political standpoint, to plunge ahead rather than conduct a serious reassessment. Similarly, in the military, there was never an honest reassessment of the operational concept of "grinding down" the enemy to achieve strategic success.⁹ Some argue that the political restrictions against expanding the war made any other course of action impossible. Nevertheless, if one is losing, an honest reassessment must be done. After four years of military involvement in the Drug War this time has come.

CHAPTER IV

A STRATEGIC ESTIMATE

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff directs that each Theater Commander in Chief (CINC) conduct strategic estimates within their areas of responsibility (AOR). As defined by the Chairman, "The strategic estimate encompasses all the considerations that adversely affect the attainment of objectives throughout the operational continuum."¹ Together with military considerations the CINC must analyze the political, social, psychological, and economic factors impacting the AOR. The concept of operations, or the road map which ties the strategic objective to the tactical employment of forces, must take all these factors into account. In the drug war the present tactical employment of military force is not creating a condition which will allow the strategic objective to be met. Unfortunately the present operational concept is also having a negative impact on the political, social, psychological, and economic factors within the AOR.

Political Factors

The United States Southern Command ~~is~~ actively supports "source" programs such as the The Andean Initiative. To the extent force is involved to suppress the drug industry, it is having a negative political impact.

The program destabilizes Andean countries. The weapons, training, and direct financial aid from the U.S. serves only to legitimize and empower already corrupt military and law enforcement organizations. Even worse, production of cocaine is being spread to other countries in the region, but more on that below.² In Colombia a police captain earns a salary of about \$180 per month, cooperation with traffickers can bring in \$5,000 a month.³ Corruption is endemic. Twenty-seven prison guards were paid \$1.5 million to allow Pablo Escobar to walk out of prison in Colombia.⁴ One development worker in the region said, "...to bring in the army (for drug control) would be the best way to promote drug trafficking in Bolivia."⁵ The U.S. State Department also recognizes that "official corruption" as a result of the tremendous financial power of the cocaine cartels is a serious problem.⁶ Herbicide spraying of coca fields also sends a negative political message, particularly when U.S. military personnel plan and provide logistic support. The Inter-American Commission on Drug Policy reports that, "The unintended consequences of an increased military role in drug enforcement in Columbia, Peru and Bolivia have included greater violence and increased human rights violations."⁷ This increased local military role is made possible only by the direct support of the U.S. military, yet this is having the unintended effect of turning the people away from the very institutions that are paid to protect them.

The U.S. military has so far avoided direct combat but is very active in direct support of foreign military forces. Troops

are on the ground in significant numbers. There are calls within the United States for greater military involvement. The Bush Administration was planning to expand operations in Latin America.⁸ The situation is similar to that of Vietnam in early 1965. Many people thought that the American military should shoulder more of the burden, but this ultimately damaged U.S. interests. The sovereignty of Latin American countries must be preserved - the use of the military increases the dependence of those countries upon the United States, erodes confidence in local institutions, and drives the political base into the hands of the enemy.

Economic Factors

The economic center of gravity in the drug war is the money to be made in selling drugs. The National Drug Control Strategy first targets the traffickers "Core Organization" in their home countries in order to drive up their costs.

Key to disrupting these operations is destruction of the trafficking infrastructure, through the investigation, prosecution, punishment, and, where appropriate, extradition of drug traffickers and money launderers; and seizure of drugs and assets; and the destruction of processing and shipping facilities.⁹

As noted above, the use of U.S. and local military force is key to this effort. One success story is described in the DOD budget submission for 1992.

The results of the operation were impressive. A drug "kingpin" and some 131 others were arrested. Numerous commercial and residential properties were seized along with 22 aircraft, over \$300,000 in U.S. currency and over 1,000 kilograms of processed and unprocessed coca products. Seven laboratories and 41 clandestine airstrips were destroyed and a major trafficking ring was totally disrupted.¹⁰

It is hard to argue with this kind of tactical success, but is this tactical success furthering the strategic goal? Cocaine cartels have reacted by diversifying their production base, modes of transport, and their products.

In "U.S. Narcotics Policy: An Anatomy of Failure", the authors analyze how the cocaine market reacts to stress. "As in the legal trade for commodities such as sugar or wheat, a crop failure in one production zone--whether from war, drought, or disease--creates a shortage of supply and raises the price for producers elsewhere, stimulating increased production in the next crop cycle."¹¹ The supply and demand model does apply here. The market may be hurt in the short term, but ultimately the industry is strengthened. Suppression in one country spreads the problem to another country, complicating both the economic and political picture. The crop eradication campaign in Bolivia pushed production to Brazil. Destruction of processing facilities in Colombia spread that industry into Ecuador.¹² The cocaine industry is like poison ivy, scratching gives some short term relief - which is hard to resist - but it spreads the problem.

The National Drug Control Strategy also targets the supply by interdicting drugs en route.

This raises the traffickers' cost of doing business by forcing them to take expensive countermeasures such as using longer and more circuitous routes, training new personnel to replace those apprehended, purchasing sophisticated electronic equipment to detect law enforcement surveillance, developing new concealment techniques, replacing expensive seized assets, and stockpiling drugs closer to the production area, making them more vulnerable to foreign law enforcement efforts.¹³

There is no doubt that the traffickers are being forced to use more sophisticated equipment and new routes, but is this a good thing? Now trafficking has spread to Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador and the island of Hispaniola. Traffickers are taking advantage of the problems in Haiti, setting up transshipment facilities there.¹⁴

It is said that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. The ingenuity of the traffickers methods, no doubt spurred by more intense interdiction efforts, have become legend, yet the availability, purity, and price of cocaine all indicate that there is sufficient product getting through to the U.S. In fact, in European countries, where little outside interdiction is attempted, the price for cocaine ranges from \$36,000 to \$100,000 per kilogram, three times the price in the United States where billions of dollars are spent on drug interdiction.¹⁵

An ominous trend in the drug industry is also a by-product of U.S. suppression and interdiction efforts. The cocaine cartels are diversifying their products. Opium is now being produced in large quantities in South America. The State Department estimates that over 50,000 acres of poppy are being cultivated in Columbia.¹⁶ The number of heroin overdoses

reported by New York City hospitals nearly doubled in 1991.¹⁷ In drugs, there is strength in diversity.

Social and Psychological Factors

The present concept of operations is driving Latin American countries to a deeper dependence on the cocaine industry because active interdiction keeps prices artificially high. The huge profits generated by cocaine sales return to producing countries to create jobs and foreign exchange. Over \$600 million annually is returned to Columbia, Peru and Bolivia from the drug trade.¹⁸ Approximately 225,000 families in Peru are dependant on coca for a living.¹⁹ Bolivia receives over \$80 million each year from the U.S. and other countries to reduce economic dependance on coca yet the amount of harvestable coca has grown every year for the past five years.²⁰ There simply is not sufficient incentive for a Bolivian farmer to stop growing coca as long as it remains more lucrative than substitute food crops. Relief will come only when there is a reduction in the price for coca.

U.S. military forces, as they are presently being used, have the long term effect of strengthening this dependance upon cocaine and other drugs in Latin America and spreading the influence of drug trafficking in the region. Efforts to make the drug trade more risky for the suppliers keeps the price high, encourages diversity, and ultimately stimulates production.

Some argue that it is necessary for the U.S. military to be involved in the drug war because the United States must be

perceived as having the national will and resolve to fight the drug scourge. In other words symbolism is important. This might be true if the present use of force was not harmful to Latin American countries and U.S. interests, or if steaming days, flying hours and contingency operations were inexpensive. Unfortunately, neither is the case.

It is interesting to note the comments of then Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci before Congress in 1988 when discussing the role of the military in the Drug War. "None of the interdiction approaches in and of themselves will work. I believe that these are not solutions to the problem, but rather the result of our rising frustrations and our inability to find a real solution."²¹

CHAPTER V

A REVISED OPERATIONAL CONCEPT

Ultimately the demand for drugs must drop for real progress to be made, this is a cultural problem that is immune to a forceful solution. However, the military can help to create the conditions necessary to improve the outlook. The objectives must be to reduce the price for cocaine, weaken the drug industry, and strengthen Latin American governments.

The following recommendations highlight the "supporting" role of the Department of Defense in a revised concept of operations:

1. Use the military strictly for monitoring and surveillance in order to identify sources and routes. This was the original mission assigned to DOD by Congress in 1989, but the military has assumed a larger role. Stop devoting DOD resources to active interdiction. Simply identifying sources and routes will aid civilian drug enforcement agencies and stop the spread of trafficking. In the long term, removing the emphasis on interdiction will reduce the price for cocaine and the strength of the drug industry. Admittedly there will be a short term increase in drug volume into the U.S., however, there would be a minimal impact since the market is already saturated. Those who want cocaine can easily obtain it.

2. Continue to integrate communications and monitoring equipment to keep abreast of the flow of drugs and aid civilian law enforcement.

3. Stop military aid targeted at eradicating crops, destroying airfields, blowing up production facilities, and seizing assets. Focus on civic action programs aimed at improving the image of the United States. Combined exercises, water well drilling, building schools, improving roads, and improving airfields are all programs that will improve relations, provide in-country experience for U.S. troops, and build the infrastructure needed in a contingency.

4. Classify data on interdiction results. These "body count" statistics serve only to encourage alternate methods and routes by drug traffickers. In fact, more cocaine being seized probably indicates more is being delivered.

5. Stop arming and financing corrupt Latin American law enforcement agencies and military forces. These countries have their own incentives to fight drugs. The U.S. should continue to provide economic aid, but the use of force, particularly in the Andean countries, is counter to U.S. interests. As the price for cocaine drops, the market will serve to remove fields from business, and crop substitution programs, which are already heavily subsidized by the U.S., will become effective.

Conclusion

After four years of military involvement in the drug war the problem has grown. The use of military force works at cross purposes to the desired result. While U.S. economic assistance in Latin America would be more effective if the price for cocaine dropped, military intervention serves to keep prices up. While the National Drug Control Strategy targets the drug supply in order to make drugs less available in the United States, cocaine, the primary target, is more available than ever. While the Andean Initiative is pumping more than \$2 billion into Columbia, Peru and Bolivia to provide the incentive for those countries to become less dependent on coca and reduce corruption, the use of force pushes the coca harvest and cocaine production to other countries and feeds corruption.

Just as in Vietnam, the overwhelming advantages the United States possesses in technology, intelligence and military strength are not sufficient to overcome the political, economic and social factors that influence the drug war. The present use of force is having unintended consequences in Latin America and in the United States. Applying lessons from the Vietnam War, U.S. military planners should develop a concept of operations that ties the tactical employment of forces to the ultimate objective. In this case - less force is the answer.

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